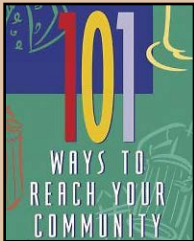
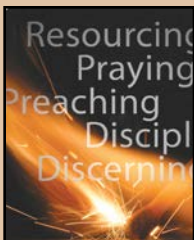


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Arkansas well represented at YOUTH 2015

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

YOUTH 2015, a fun-filled quadrennial event packed with opportunities for worship and learning, outreach and service, drew about 4,800 United Methodist young people, youth leaders, staff and volunteers gathered to Orlando June 24-28. More than 200 of those participants came from 15 churches within the Arkansas Conference.

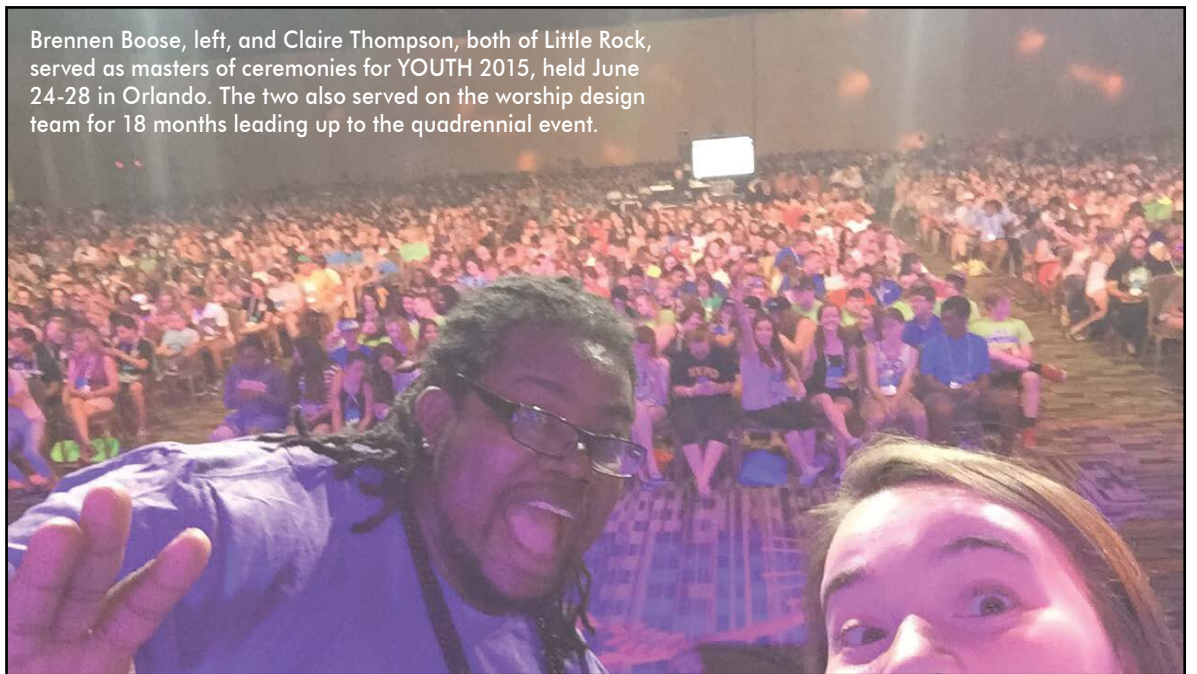
Two members of the YOUTH 2015 worship design team came from the Arkansas Conference: high school senior Claire Thompson, a member of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock, and Brennen Boose, who first arrived in Arkansas as a mission intern with the General Board of Global Ministries and is now an active member of Theresa Hoover Memorial UMC Little Rock.

The worship design group “planned everything that happened in the big room: the worship, the Bible study, and the late-night events,” Thompson said.

In addition to participating in about 18 months of advance planning via phone and Google Hangout, Thompson and Boose served as co-emcees during the event—not something that Thompson thought would work for her.

[See YOUTH 2015, page 13]

Brennen Boose, left, and Claire Thompson, both of Little Rock, served as masters of ceremonies for YOUTH 2015, held June 24-28 in Orlando. The two also served on the worship design team for 18 months leading up to the quadrennial event.



LEFT: The Rev. Jay Clark, associate pastor at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock, leads “Funnzies” before worship at YOUTH 2015.



RIGHT: Arkansas youth Lauren Lovelady, Leah Paige and Claire Thompson cast votes for youth representatives to the South Central Jurisdictional Conference in July 2016. Thompson was among those selected to attend the gathering at which new bishops are elected.

COURTESY PHOTOS

Rogers Hispanic Mission celebrates launch

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

A cooperative effort among multiple United Methodist congregations has created a more inviting ministry with the Hispanic population in northwest Arkansas.

Leaders from four Rogers area churches—Central, First, Grace and Oakley Chapel—were on hand July 12 to participate in the opening worship service of the Rogers Hispanic Mission.

The Rev. Ramiro Lizzcano, the mission's pastor, is excited about what many persons connected with the ministry see as a homecoming.

[See MISSION, page 15]



Members of Rogers Hispanic Mission, Grace UMC Rogers and other sister churches receive Holy Communion together at the mission's July 12 service.

COURTESY PHOTO

Unity and community are created in Christ

BY WILLIAM O. "BUD" REEVES
Special Contributor

One variation on Murphy's Law is "Everything takes longer than it should."

We should have been over the race issue a long time ago. The major



Bud Reeves

civil rights laws were passed 50 years ago. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated 47 years ago, and now he is honored with a national holiday.

Men and women of different races occupy positions of authority, from the President on down.

But in the last three years, incidents of racial tension have blazed across our screens from Miami to Ferguson to Baltimore. On June 17 in Charleston, S.C., a white man joined a Bible study at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, then opened fire on the participants, killing nine of them, including the pastor. The aftermath has been a mixture of reactions both for and against symbols perceived as racist—primarily the Confederate battle flag—alongside calls for forgiveness and peace.

Walls of division

We have made progress, but minorities still have barriers to overcome. We still hear racially prejudiced language. There are still statistical disparities in education and economic opportunities between whites and everybody else. I had hoped by now we would be beyond racism, but it's clear the walls are still up.

There are many dividing walls in our society and our world. Race is only one. Religion is another. Radical Islamic fundamentalists kill people who do not believe as they do. Christians in many places are under intense persecution. Economic and class barriers alienate and ostracize poor people. There are walls of hostility against people of different sexual orientation or identity. Many children of God who are gay or lesbian feel unloved and unwelcome, especially in churches.

Barriers between people are nothing new. When Christianity was beginning to spread from Jerusalem across the Roman Empire, they had to deal with the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles. To the Jews, all Gentiles were despicable people, godless, without hope in the world. They were forbidden even to enter the Temple in Jerusalem. Archeologists unearthed an inscription that stood at the entrance to the Temple that read, "No foreigner may enter within the fence and enclosure around the temple. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame that his death will follow." Their slogan was *not* "Open hearts, open minds, open doors!"

In the Letter to the Ephesians, Paul addresses the wall of separation. He explains that the reason Christ came was to break down the barrier of hostility that had been there for generations. Christ came to create community, to make peace, to bring the Jews and Gentiles into the same family of God.

Barrier-breaking love

This is a radical new idea. The sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world destroys the barriers of religion. His grace and love create a new spiritual community that includes everyone, because everyone is a sinner saved by grace. We do not encourage sin, but we accept all sinners, because that's what we all are. So whoever we are, we can live in unity because of our common relationship with Jesus. Paul writes, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God" [Ephesians 2:19].

In the Letter to the Galatians, Paul describes the community of Christ: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" [Galatians 3:28]. Religion, race, gender, nationality, economic condition—none of these walls exist under the love of Jesus Christ! He gives us the power to overcome all the barriers.

I believe that most walls between people—the hatred and prejudice that divides us—are based in fear and insecurity. But the perfect

love of Christ casts out all fear. Sometimes the barriers are not the external barriers of religion or society, but the internal walls we put up within our own hearts. We go about our daily lives with an attitude toward the world that determines how we interact with people we meet. If we choose, we can keep the walls of fear and insecurity up. Hostility, resentment, bitterness, alienation, mistrust and anger can build up inside us until there is no way we can touch or be touched by other people. That's a lonely way to live.

Christ comes to smash the barriers that create loneliness, alienation, resentment and bitterness. Maybe you *have* been hurt or given raw deals in life. Maybe you deserve to be angry. But you don't have to stay that way. The love of Christ enables us to overcome the barriers, to see people as children of God, to step forward with trust and hope into a positive future.

Agents of peace

One of the nine African-American students who integrated Little Rock Central High in 1957 was Elizabeth Eckford. She was the subject of one of the most dramatic photos of the Central High crisis. News photographer Will Counts took a picture of Elizabeth, 15 years old, walking down the sidewalk surrounded by a shouting mob. The photo caught a white teenager named Hazel Bryan in mid-shout, her face contorted with anger and hatred.

Forty years later, in 1997, as the



Show your care for God's creation!
Be sure to recycle your copy of the *Arkansas United Methodist* when you're finished reading it (or share it with a friend).

EDITOR'S CORNER

BY AMY FORBUS

'Help me understand..'

I've heard recently how these three words, when spoken in earnest, have the power to break through barriers.

"Help me understand..."

A friend makes a surprising decision. A generational difference lays bare a raw patch of long-ignored conflict. An unexpected revelation leads to confusion, and one person must reconsider what she thought she knew about someone else.

"How could you...?" "I just don't get it." We've all had responses like those. Though they may not be appropriate for speaking aloud in every situation, they do help us sort through our emotions when we receive information we don't like.

When it's time to engage, though, it may make sense to put those words aside, and instead ask for help from those whose perspectives may confuse us the most.

We may or may not have had training in holy conferencing (though the Arkansas Conference guide available at <http://goo.gl/jnFDDeY> can be useful in any conversation, not just those about human sexuality).

But we do have training in being kind to one another; it's a life-long course for people of faith. "Help me understand" is one tool I've learned can fasten a plank onto a bridge, rather than burning it.

To reach me, send an email to aforbus@arumc.org.

nation was remembering Central High, Hazel Bryan Massery sought out Elizabeth Eckford and apologized for her hatred. After 40 years of that incident being portrayed around the world, that burden weighing on her heart, Hazel asked Elizabeth to forgive her. After 40 years, with the same dignity that propelled her down that sidewalk, Elizabeth Eckford accepted Hazel's apology. Walls *can* finally come down.

We can be a force for unity and community. We can be agents of Christ's peace in the world. We can work for reconciliation. When we let Christ tear down our walls, we can break the barriers and include all people in the community of love.

How? By prayer, by loving other people, by refusing to condone or participate in behavior that excludes people, by openness to folks who are not like us. (The Revs. Ronnie Miller-Yow and Maxine Allen gave other excellent suggestions in last month's *Arkansas United Methodist*.)

Maybe we can't wipe out religious hatred or racial prejudice in the world. But we can create community right where we are by the way we live day by day.

We need to tear down some walls!

The Rev. Dr. Reeves serves as senior pastor of First UMC Fort Smith. Email: breeves@arumc.org.



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Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
Sept. 4	Aug. 14
Oct. 2	Sept. 15
Nov. 6	Oct. 20



GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST: A word from the Bishop

BY GARY E. MUELLER

What if?

I've read all the reports about the decline of the church. Like you, I've done my fair share of gnashing of teeth and wringing of hands. But even more than that, I've experienced the deep pain of seeing little impact from all my best efforts to change the church.

I cannot face this reality and not engage in deep soul-searching and prayer. And what has begun to emerge from this is not a new set of "quick fixes" or "latest and greatest ideas." Rather, it's a series of questions. Interestingly, they all begin with "What if" and, perhaps even more interestingly, they focus on what we Christians can do individually and together starting right now.

Some of these "what ifs" are based on observations; others on long-held notions; and still others are the result of a blast of recent "God Prods" that have caused me to look at things in a brand new way.

So I share them with you, imperfectly posed as they are.

And I invite you to reflect on them, talk with others about them and compose your own "What if" questions.

- What if we stopped referring to ourselves as "the church" and instead called ourselves the Body of Christ?
- What if we stopped treating hot-button issues like partisan politics and began treating those with whom we disagree as if they were Christ?
- What if we spent a lot less time worrying about what we are getting out of church and began focusing more on how Christ can use us in his mission in the world?
- What if we refrained from working so hard to get others to agree with us about theology, worship style and what a "Christian" worldview is and simply listened a lot more?
- What if we were less passionate about football games and more passionate about living as disciples of Jesus Christ?
- What if we realized that church is not just another activity in our busy lives, but a place where we are transformed so

we can join Jesus Christ in transforming the world?

- What if we really got serious about making Jesus the main thing?
- What if we started treating others the same way Jesus treats us?
- What if we realized "those people" we don't like, completely disagree with and want nothing to do with are people for whom Jesus died?

Perhaps we need to spend a lot less time on answers, considerably more time on questions and even still more time on listening to God as we think about these soulful matters. I know I do.

Grace and Peace,

Gary E. Mueller

Learning, teaching and seeking valuable United Methodist Women's history

BY SARA D. BAYLES
Special Contributor

In March of 1869, eight women met at Tremont Methodist Episcopal Church in Boston and organized themselves to send medical missionary Clara Swain and educator Isabella Thoburn to India. This gathering of women first became the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, and is now known throughout the denomination and the world as the United Methodist Women.

The recent "United Methodist Women's History: Voices Lost and Found" conference provided an occasion for rediscovering, remembering, and reinterpreting the forgotten and untold stories of women throughout United Methodist traditions.

From May 28-30, United Methodist scholars and United Methodist Women from throughout the worldwide connection of the church gathered at Methodist Theological School in Ohio for this conference, devoted to the study and collaboration of research relating to the history of women in Methodism

and Evangelical United Brethren traditions. These three days provided an opportunity for understanding the historical impact of women in Methodist traditions and sought to identify areas of further exploration.

I was able to attend this conference and present my research, "Places of Transformation: The Homes and Hearts of the Women Called Methodist" which explores the ministry of women that takes place within their homes. Throughout the process of my research, I continued to be transformed as I learned from the lives of women throughout church history, who in their simple gestures—baking pies, collecting school supplies, knitting blankets and caring for their families and communities—furthered the missions of the church.

Artifacts, rare publications and archives on lesser known women in



Sara D. Bayles

Methodism surfaced as those gathered sought to learn more about the often untold and frequently forgotten stories of the women within the Methodist movements. The United Methodist Women's national leadership organized this gathering to celebrate and collect the stories of women in Methodism as the 150th anniversary of the organization approaches in 2019.

As I have transitioned this past month into my new appointment at First United Methodist Church Fort Smith, I continue to find many pleasant surprises. Most recently, in the archives room of our church, I discovered that Franklin Wilder, the author of my favorite—and now out of print—book about Susanna Wesley, *Immortal Mother*, was a former member of the church I serve and now a member of the church triumphant.

I have also uncovered reports of an 1882 visit from Frances Willard, a key leader of Women's Home Missionary Society and Women's Christian Temperance Union, to the Methodist gatherings in Fort Smith. These sorts of discoveries lie at the heart of the historical remembering

of women in Methodism. Often the stories of women get left out of church history, yet women shape and give great input into the mission of Methodism.

For United Methodist Women, the task of telling and retelling the stories and histories of all women throughout Methodism values the past, anchors the present and inspires the future. From now until the 150th anniversary celebration in 2019, all United Methodists are encouraged to share stories of the women in mission and ministry as part of an ongoing project that seeks to collect these stories, online at www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/150.

These often untold stories are voices that have far too long been lost in the history of Methodism, and in finding their stories, we continue to discover the powerful witness of women within our denomination.

The Rev. Bayles is a provisional elder in the Arkansas Conference and associate pastor at First UMC Fort Smith. She is a May 2015 graduate of Duke Divinity School, where she earned her Master of Divinity degree and a Certificate in Gender, Theology, and Ministry for her

research on women in American Methodism, Susanna Wesley and the missiology of United Methodist Women. For more information, or to schedule Bayles to visit your United Methodist Women circle or other church group to share more about this project or United Methodist Women's history, contact her at sara.bayles@arumc.org.

APPOINTMENTS

The following appointment changes have been announced since the 2015 Arkansas Annual Conference adjourned.

- Clefton Vaughan (elder)—International Church of Bangkok (Thailand); retaining membership in Arkansas Annual Conference; effective July 15, 2015
- Jimmie Snow—Wesley UMC Cotter; effective July 1, 2015

For the most recent appointment changes, visit www.arumc.org/appointments.

St. Paul UMC Fort Smith shows love to neighbors through 'Diaper Dandies'

On Saturday, June 27, St. Paul United Methodist Church Fort Smith held its second Diaper Dandies distribution event. For the past year, members of the Diaper Dandies ministry team, headed by Mary Huss and the Rev. Steve Poarch, have prayed, planned, organized and fundraised in preparation for these events, the first of which was held on March 14.

Members of the community with infants and toddlers are invited to Diaper Dandies to receive a two-week supply of disposable diapers, wipes and diaper rash ointment—no strings attached. The church requests only minimal information from those receiving supplies, and uses it solely to notify participants of future church-sponsored events.

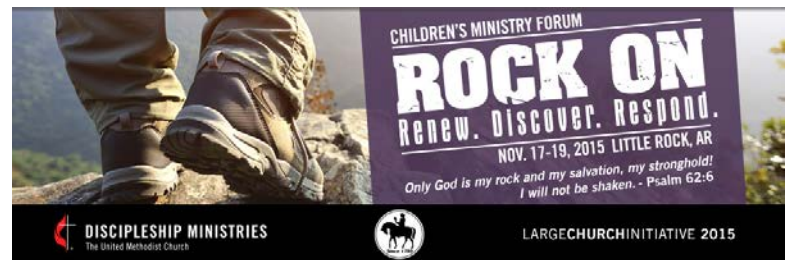
The vision for this ministry arose from the number of families with children who came to the church seeking various forms of assistance. Church members and staff noticed that too often, the children in those families wore soiled diapers that should have long since been changed. Based on Scripture's repeated call to care for children, the church founded Diaper Dandies to provide comfort to its community's most vulnerable members and support to their parents and guardians.

To date, 60 babies from 38 families have received these gifts of love. A third distribution event already has been scheduled for September. Depending upon available funding, St. Paul UMC hopes to conduct even more and larger events in the future.

—Submitted by Rev. Steve Poarch



COURTESY PHOTO



Scholarship deadline for Children's Ministry Forum extended to Aug. 17

For the first time, Discipleship Ministries is bringing the biennial Children's Ministry Forum (CMF) leadership development conference to Arkansas. First UMC Little Rock will host the Nov. 17-19, 2015 event.

Thanks to the generosity of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, the Conference Children's Ministry Council is offering 10 scholarships to attend CMF. To apply, visit <http://kidz.arumc.org/scholarships>. Preference will be given to those serving in small membership churches and those who demonstrate financial need.

Though marketed for children's ministry leaders in large United Methodist churches, CMF will contain relevant information for children's ministry in all size congregations, and will offer opportunities for worship, spiritual renewal, continuing education, fellowship, networking and support for children's ministry leaders.

This year's theme is Rock On: Renew. Discover. Respond. With more than 100 classes taught by nationally recognized leaders in the fields of spiritual formation, teaching, volunteer recruitment, technology, communication, administration and leadership development, it promises to be the most prestigious continuing education event in the country this year.

To learn more, or for a link to register, visit the event page at <http://kidz.arumc.org/rock-on-november-17-19-2015>. Early bird registration runs until Aug. 28.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

On discussing controversial topics

Annual Conference set aside Resolutions 1 and 3 without complete voice. Here's my "voice": can't we be more welcoming? Drop the language "homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teachings," as there are other lifestyles incompatible with Christian teachings. We don't debate resolutions about materialism, and yet Jesus said we cannot serve both God and money.

For my daughter, Carole, it was her partner who said, "Something is missing that we had at Sunday School growing up." Through her partner's influence, Carole returned to a United Methodist Church, which, thankfully, welcomed them without judgment. Now my grandchildren go to Sunday School! God was working through Carole's partner, and so I learned to let God be Judge. Similarly, my faith makes me a pacifist, and my younger daughter runs a gun store. Our theologies disagree on gun usage, but the family pulls together. We choose to act in love, even when we don't agree. Love allows us to be family despite differences.

I wish the United Methodist family could treat one another with that kind of love—one that acknowledges that we are not in agreement on some issues, but the same Father works within us all, transforming us. Let God's mercy reign!

Rev. Jenni Duncan
St. Andrew UMC Little Rock

Those of us on the Petitions and Resolutions Task Force worked with Bishop Mueller to encourage a kinder dialogue surrounding controversial resolutions and petitions at Annual

Conference 2015, including prayer, table discussion and passing the peace.

Some in the Conference chose combat over respectful dialogue, employing parliamentary tricks to stop discussion on Resolution 1 and to block consideration altogether on Resolution 3. These members would have opposed the resolutions anyway, but they circumvented the new format instead of simply voting "no."

Both resolutions concerned human sexuality. The global church is torn over statements about homosexuality in the *Book of Discipline*. The Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell* has accelerated the debate in this country. There is confusion, pain, misunderstanding. But if we meet in a spirit of Holy Conferencing, we learn about each other's individual stories and viewpoints and achieve understanding.

Debate must be done in a spirit of respect, not of one-upmanship, not masked in parliamentary maneuvering. The new format is a good way to do things. When we are refused the right to debate, *we all lose*. Such behavior must stop. We must have conversation if the United Methodist Church is to make disciples, to grow, or even survive.

Harold Hughes
Quapaw Quarter UMC Little Rock

An opinion on a controversial topic

As a Christian, I cannot understand how people are condoning and supporting the gay, lesbian or transgender lifestyles. They fall under the category of "sexually immoral" and God calls it an abomination to him (Lev 20:13). It really

upsets me that our children are being exposed to such sinful acts and leading them to believe it's okay.

I am appalled that some of our church leaders are supporting this.

The "open hearts, open minds, open doors" policy of the Methodist Church is partially right; our doors should be open to all who want to learn about God and accept Jesus into their lives, but we are not to change the words of the Bible just so we won't hurt somebody's feelings. The church can't be "open minded" to today's life-styles, it must stand for what the Bible teaches (II Tim 3:16).

We have set back and allowed these people to force their way of life on us. It's time for Christians to speak out and stand up for what the Bible teaches, after all, it's God we'll have to answer to, not man!

Sandra Faulkner
DeAnn UMC Hope

Letters to the Editor policy:

All letters must be signed (name and city/church) and include the writer's phone number or email address. Letters may be sent to editor@arumc.org, or to 800 Daisy Bates Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Letters longer than 200 words will not be considered for publication.

The Arkansas United Methodist will not print letters containing personal attacks.

The Arkansas United Methodist reserves the right to publish Letters to the Editor in print, on the web, or both.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Christ of the Hills United Methodist Men receive national award

The United Methodist Men of Christ of the Hills UMC Hot Springs Village received the honor of Top United Methodist Men Unit in the Nation for 2015.

Dan Ramsey, president of the National Association of Conference Presidents of UM Men, announced the winner at a March 5-8 meeting of conference presidents and prayer advocates in Nashville, Tenn. Fred Gore, 2015 president of Christ of the Hills UMC Men, and senior pastor the Rev. Dr. Walter L. "Bubba" Smith had planned to attend to receive the award, but were forced to cancel plans because of poor weather. Instead, Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men, presented the award to Gore and Smith during the Arkansas Annual Conference.

Men of Christ of the Hills UMC conduct an annual retreat, sponsor a sweetheart breakfast for wives and annually raise \$14,000 for various mission efforts through an annual golf tournament, a church barbeque, recycling aluminum cans and printer cartridges and assisting



AUM PHOTO BY MARCIA DUNBAR

the United Methodist Women with their garage sale. They provide food baskets and deliver Christmas gifts to 40 families, including 100 children; deliver food baskets provided by other groups in the church at Easter and Thanksgiving; serve monthly at two local food banks; work with the Oaklawn Race Track Chapel to provide support to the approximately one thousand "backside" race track workers and their families; and support the collective ministry of several

churches to serve Sunday lunches to people in need.

Thirty-five members of the group have attended the Walk to Emmaus, and in 2014, Christ of the Hills UMC UM Men contributed over 6,000 volunteer hours.

Philander Smith College to inaugurate Smothers

United Methodist-related Philander Smith College on Saturday, Aug. 29 will celebrate the inauguration of Dr. Roderick L. Smothers Sr. as the 14th president of the historically black undergraduate institution.

The ceremony, which begins at noon, is the capstone event of the four-day celebration, which kicks off Thursday, Aug. 27 with a campus cookout, a community symposium and the opening of an African-American art exhibit.

Friday, Aug. 28 will feature student engagement in a variety of activities, as well as the President's Inaugural Scholarship Gala. A reception will follow the Saturday ceremony, and the weekend's activities will conclude with an ecumenical prayer service on Sunday, Aug. 30 at 2 p.m.

For additional information, including sponsorship opportunities, visit www.philander.edu or contact C.J. Duvall, Office of Institutional Advancement, 501-370-5378 or cjduvall@philander.edu.



Roderick L. Smothers Sr.

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION & DISASTER RESPONSE: UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES

For information on any Volunteers In Mission (VIM) project, contact the individual listed or Byron Mann, Conference VIM coordinator: vim@arumc.org or 870-826-0268. For Disaster Response (DR) projects, contact Byron or Janice Mann, DR co-coordinators: disaster@arumc.org or 870-703-8359 (Janice). On Facebook, join the group "Volunteers in Mission & Disaster Response - Serving Arkansas & Beyond" for updates.

SCJ Mission Academy 2015 set for Sept. 25-27 in Texas

The South Central Jurisdiction Mission Academy brings together those who desire to serve others through hands-on mission to learn, share and discuss healthy and effective ways to do so. This year, the Academy offers a variety of courses, from Disaster Response to Leadership to Understanding Poverty and much more.

This year's academy will be hosted at Hoblitzelle Camp and Conference Center in Midlothian, Texas, from 10 a.m. Friday, Sept. 25 until 1 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 27. To review course options or to register, visit www.scjumc.org/academy.

If you have questions after reviewing the information on the website, contact Audrey Phelps, Volunteers In Mission and Disaster Response director for the South Central Jurisdiction, at 636-344-0389 or vimphepls@gmail.com.

If you plan to attend, please email Janice and Byron Mann, as they are keeping track of attendees from Arkansas and are available to offer referrals for particular classes.

Notes of thanks from Byron and Janice

Many thanks to those Early Response Team (ERT) trained and certified individuals who responded from around the state to form a team that worked for a week in Nashville after the May 8 storm doing tree work, tarping and debris removal and to those folks

who did the same in Scott County. ERTs from Perryville partnered with Red Cross to distribute cleaning buckets in Perry County, thanks!! Two residents in Perry County are connected to the Long Term Recovery effort in Mayflower for assistance if needed.

We would also like to express appreciation to the ERT from Eureka Springs, with helpers from Leslie and Fort Smith, who responded to flood survivors in Madison County after flash floods heavily damaged their properties. Fort Smith ERTs were on standby for referrals from Red Cross and Salvation Army, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) partners, should they have encountered any unmet needs in Crawford County. We were very thankful for our VOAD partners, Arkansas Baptist and Christian Aid Ministries of Arkansas, who responded to Jefferson County where they assisted families with flood clean-up.

And one more thank-you to that lone Early Response Team who arrived to help with the tree on Hodges Cottage at Mount Eagle after the recent wind storm there. (A crane will be required to complete the work.)

—Byron and Janice Mann

More work to do

There are more Disaster Recovery and VIM projects around the state awaiting volunteer workers. To get involved, contact Janice or Byron Mann at the phone numbers or email addresses listed above.

School of Congregational Development satellite events in Arkansas, Aug. 14 and 15

The School for Congregational Development is live-streaming two events during its annual gathering—one entirely in Spanish.

Aug. 14, 6 to 8 p.m. Central time: Join a two-hour live, interactive discussion in Spanish entitled "Forming Leaders in the Local Church." This session will be broadcast to those gathered at First UMC Dardanelle. Presenter Dr. Iosmar Álvarez will share years of ministry practice around forming leaders in the local church that will lead the congregation to multiply its DNA and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Aug. 15, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Central time: "Crossroads and Community Reach & Outreach" features two outstanding leaders—the Rev. John Edgar, founding pastor of United Methodist Church for All People, a multicultural, multi-class congregation in Ohio; and Dr. B. Kevin Smalls, a leader in guiding congregations to create innovative worship experiences. This event will be broadcast at Better Community Developers, Inc., in Little Rock, and is sponsored by Theresa Hoover Memorial UMC. For more information about these satellite events, as well as contact information for the Arkansas sites, visit <https://goo.gl/Zcwlwp>.

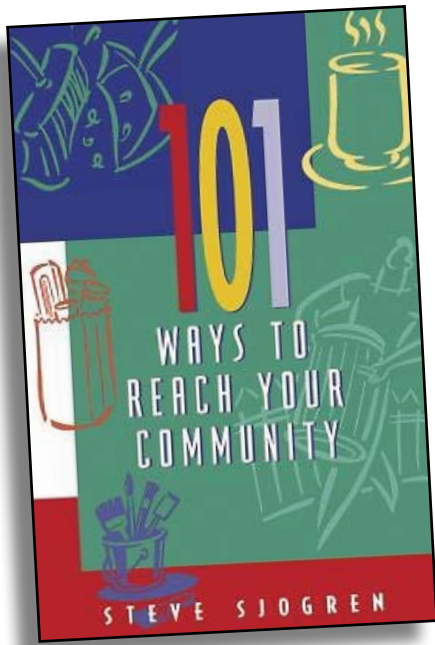
Registration is \$10 for the Dardanelle broadcast. Conference funding for lodging is available to participants in the Dardanelle event; for details, contact the Rev. Maxine Allen, mallen@arumc.org. For other questions concerning this site, contact the Rev. Vitalino Mendez, 501-201-0311 or oracioninter04@yahoo.com; or the Rev. Jim Benfer, 479-699-4683 or jbenfer@centurytel.net. Visit www.fumcdardanelle.org for driving directions.

Registration is \$29 for the Little Rock broadcast, which is hosted at 3805 W. 12th Street. For questions concerning this site, contact Deborah Bell, 501-663-9181 or dbell@bcdinc.org.

For additional information on the speakers, or to register, visit <http://scdsatellites.org>.

BOOK REVIEW

Author offers practical 'recipes' for reaching out



101 Ways to Reach Your Community

Steve Sjogren
NavPress, 2001

God has given us mission fields and the message of Christ, but how do we do evangelism today?

"Evangelism" can be a loaded term. It sometimes reminds me of "Bullhorn Guy," who visited our college campus every week like clockwork. I suppose shouting about salvation through a bullhorn was what he would call

evangelism, but mostly it just chased everyone away.

So how can we effectively and passionately reach our neighborhoods with the love of Christ? Steve Sjogren, the founding pastor of Vineyard Community Church, has given us a cookbook of sorts with *101 Ways to Reach Your Community*. It provides recipes for a Sunday School Class or

congregation to engage in simple acts of kindness while sharing the message of Christ and guiding people to that congregation.

For each one- to two-page evangelism recipe, Sjogren includes a short list of ingredients (the required supplies and participants), suggestions for possible community locations, an explanation of how to do the project and a story from his congregation's experience of attempting the idea.

What could connect you to your mission field? Could it be "#11 Stamp Giveaway on April 15th in Front of Post Office"? Maybe you have a college in town that could use "#57 Dorm Move in Help." Would it stun everyone if a team showed up at the corner to offer a "#40 Totally Free Car Wash"? Perhaps your congregation has the right talents for "#61 Christmas Giftwrapping in the Mall."

These ideas are all part of what Sjogren calls servant evangelism, which unleashes the congregation's gifts for ministry. His practical recipes connect our missional hands with our hearts for reaching the unchurched. There is no "bullhorn

guy," just some devoted disciples loving their community and welcoming folks.

After one event, leaders in Sjogren's congregation discovered that they had reached several hundred people in one afternoon. When asked why they were doing it, church members would answer something like, "We're here today doing a community service project to show you God's love in a practical way." Every person touched by the ministry was offered a connection card explaining the servant evangelism project and providing church contact information. Along the way, several meaningful

conversations occurred in which a team member was able to share her or his faith story.

A congregation or small group can easily use this book to cook up some amazing ministry with its neighborhood. By stepping outside the comfort zone of the church's property and directly engaging the mission field in small acts of servant evangelism, church members and their mission fields will discover the love of God in action.

The Rev. Dr. Blake Bradford is the assistant director for clergy development with the Arkansas Conference Center for Vitality.

BY BLAKE BRADFORD
Special Contributor

We can't depend upon our culture to do our evangelism for us anymore. That day (if it ever really existed) is long past, and so the church must exercise our atrophied evangelism muscles if we are to connect to our neighborhoods.

Recommended reading

The book reviewed here comes from a reading list recommended by Bishop Gary Mueller. Look for reviews of the remaining books on the list in upcoming issues of the *Arkansas United Methodist*. All of the titles are currently available for purchase via Cokesbury.com:

- *Loving the World with God: Fourth Day Living* by Rebecca Dwight Bruff
- *Calvin vs Wesley: Bringing Belief in Line with Practice* by Don Thorsen
- *Revival: Faith as Wesley Lived It* by Adam Hamilton
- *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr

CLASSIFIEDS

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First United Methodist Church, Magnolia, Arkansas, is seeking to hire a full time Director for our growing youth ministry. Candidates should have significant experience with both junior and senior high school students and have strong leadership skills. The successful candidate will have a strong Christian and biblical background in order to provide spiritual leadership to our youth. Candidates must be committed to the United Methodist Church and Wesleyan theology. Salary commensurate with experience and education. Resumes may be sent to: Search Committee, First UMC, 320 W. Main St., Magnolia, AR 71753.

Full-Time Director of Christian Education: Arkadelphia First United Methodist Church is looking for a full-time Director of Christian Education. This person will have responsibility for our children's ministries as well as coordinating responsibilities for our adult education program. For a complete job description or to apply for the job, please contact Bro. Jim at 246-2493 (ch); 870-814-1216 (cell); or jim.polk@arumc.org.

ORGANIST: Heritage UMC Van Buren is seeking a talented individual to join the Worship Arts team of our dynamic, growing congregation. The organist should be comfortable with traditional, gospel, and blended settings. A strong testimony of faith in Jesus Christ and a commitment to the core values and mission statement of Heritage Church is a must. Time Type:

Part Time; Compensation: Negotiable. Your areas of expertise and experience may be combined to create a position on our team that meets specific needs in our Worship Ministry and beyond. Church Size: 1000. To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to: cking@heritage.church.

Ozark Mission Project is hiring a part-time mission coordinator to work out of our Little Rock office. Interested? Visit <http://www.ozarkmissionproject.org/latest.php>.

FAMILY SPECIALIST: FUMC Blytheville is seeking an energetic, creative Christian adult to help prepare children and youth for a lifetime of faith and service. Flexible schedule, 15-20 hours/week. Duties include planning, recruiting and supervising volunteers. Should exhibit a heart for children, and positive leadership, communication and organizational skills. Methodist background preferred. Send resume to bfumc_nrm@sbcglobal.net.

AUDIO VISUAL TECHNICIAN: Jacksonville First United Methodist Church is looking for an experienced, part time AV technician to run sound, video, and create recordings during church events. Minimum one year experience required. Must be familiar with audio/video systems and functionality. Must be able to trouble shoot and resolve issues quickly. Send resumes to info@jacksonvilleumc.com.

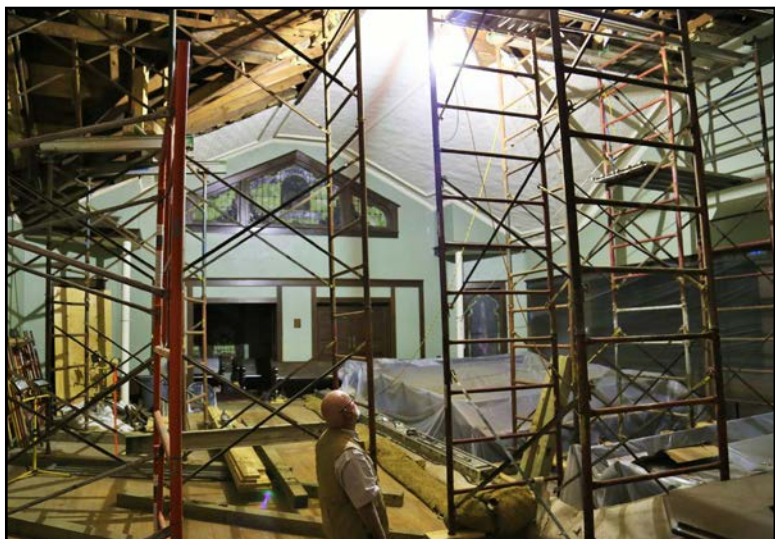
First Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, in Little Rock,

Arkansas, is searching for a paid part time Contemporary Worship Leader for our contemporary worship service. This position is and will combine with duties related to that ministry area. This person needs to have a strong faith in Jesus Christ and a passion for leading people in contemporary worship. A background in contemporary praise and worship music is essential. The ability to play an instrument (keyboard or guitar preferred) and put together arrangements to fit both vocalists and instrumentalists is vital. Knowledge of presentation software, Power Church and Power Point, is required. FCC has a well-established volunteer musicians and singers who make up the praise team. Send resume to 1500 N. Mississippi Street, Little Rock, AR 72207; or contact Rev. Leon Gray, phone 501-225-5656.

First Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, in Little Rock, Arkansas has an immediate opening for a paid part time Director of Music Ministries who is responsible for Traditional Worship Services weekly, a hand bell choir and an ensemble. This person needs to have a strong faith in Jesus Christ and a passion for leading people in traditional worship. All serious inquiries are welcomed. Send resume to 1500 N. Mississippi Street, Little Rock, AR 72207; or contact Rev. Leon Gray, phone 501-225-5656.

Home Study: Save \$\$\$ Christian Bible College, P.O. Box 8968 Rocky Mt., NC 27804 Phone (252) 451-1031; www.christianbiblecollege.org.

Hamburg church receives historic preservation grant



The Rev. Greg Comer surveys the scaffolding set up in the sanctuary of First UMC Hamburg.

COURTESY PHOTO

BY AMY FORBUS
Editor

First United Methodist Church Hamburg has faced a daunting architectural challenge this year, but the congregation's plan for restoration is becoming a reality thanks to some large-scale support.

In January, the church discovered significant damage to its 110-year-old sanctuary.

"I said, 'We've got problems with this wall,'" recalls the Rev. Greg Comer, the church's pastor. "The inspector took a look and said, 'Oh, my.'"

A design flaw had allowed water to back up in one of the walls, causing damage that didn't become visible until it was severe. "The roof was in danger of falling in," Comer said.

Church leaders made arrangements to stabilize the roof. When they realized that one of the beams had slipped down more than a foot, they moved worship to the fellowship hall until further notice.

They contacted the Department of Arkansas Heritage and the National Register of Historic Places, upon which the building is listed. Through those organizations, they learned that grant funding might be available to help with the cost of repairs that also would preserve the building's noteworthy architectural features.

In June, Comer received word from Governor Asa Hutchinson that the church would receive a \$75,000 grant through the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Those funds, combined with an anonymous gift of \$45,000 and profits from the sale of a house that had been donated to the church, go a long way toward covering the necessary repairs.

Plans feature placing a new 40-foot-long beam under the highest point of the roof. Under the terms of the grant, the target date for completion is July 1, 2016. A local company with experience in restoration projects will handle the work. In the meantime, preparation has included removing the original tin ceiling tiles, which were affixed to hardwood with nearly 100 nails each, and removing the stained glass windows, which will be refurbished before reinstallation.

During the unexpected relocation, Comer has been happy to see a steady level of church attendance and activities.

"We haven't given up ministry... it's one of those things we just kind of have to focus on at the moment," he says.

To some extent, the repairs have even served as a rallying point for the congregation and the community.

"It's generated an interest from the community that we haven't had before," Comer said, noting that non-members inquire about the project's progress when he's out around town. He also has received several emails from people he's never met, who write to share what the church has meant to them over the years. The major anonymous donor toward the project shared that his gift was a result of the impact that the church has made on his life.

"[The restoration] has helped us to realize the heritage of this church, and the people whose lives have been touched," Comer said.

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Harrisburg kids surpass pastor's challenge

Vacation Bible School (VBS) participants at First United Methodist Church Harrisburg received a challenge from their pastor, the Rev. Clark Atkins: raise \$1,000 for the Backpacks for Kids program that the church helps sponsor through the local school district to feed hungry students, and he would let one of the VBS children shave his head.

In Arkansas, approximately 200,000 children face food scarcity on a regular basis. That statistic led to the 200,000 Reasons to Fight Childhood Hunger initiative among United Methodists—and to the challenge Atkins issued to the VBS children.

The children had no problem at all meeting their goal and reaping their reward.

"I set the bar too low!" Atkins posted on social media. "They raised \$2,194.03! Praise God!"

Part of the church's new Mobile Food Pantry ministry involves working with the Harrisburg Schools' Backpacks for Kids program to deliver backpacks filled with much-needed, child-friendly snacks to ensure that students have food on the weekends. The money raised by



Coached by hairstylist and fellow church member Liz Bornhoff, Vacation Bible School student Kalleigh Jones puts clippers to the Rev. Clark Atkins' scalp. The pastor agreed to let a VBS participant shave his head if VBS raised \$1,000 to feed hungry children; the kids raised more than double that goal.

COURTESY PHOTO

kids, for kids through VBS will purchase food for that program. Students from the Arkansas State University Wesley Foundation campus ministry in Jonesboro will help with distribution, as well.

Has your church participated in a project to combat childhood hunger? Share photos and details on social media, and use the hashtag #200KReasons, or send to 200KReasons@arumc.org. For resources to help you get started, visit <http://200kreasons.arumc.org>.



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Hendrix College invites applications and nominations for the position of Chaplain of the College. The Chaplain provides overall leadership for religious life and campus ministry at the college. In addition, the Chaplain is the primary contact between the college and the United Methodist Church and is actively involved in developing and leading church relations activities to strengthen the college's relationship with the Church. The Chaplain reports to the Senior Executive Vice President and is a member of the college's Advancement Leadership Team. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled.

Candidates must possess a minimum of a Masters of Divinity degree; be ordained in the United Methodist Church as an Elder; and have excellent oral and written communication skills and the ability to speak effectively in public venues. The successful candidate will possess the ability to build rapport quickly and effectively with all constituents, both internal and external, and to work collaboratively with all constituents.

Hendrix College is deeply committed to fostering a diverse educational environment and invites nominations and applications for the position of Chaplain. If you would like to nominate an individual for this position please visit hendrix.edu/chaplainsearch. Candidates are encouraged to apply online by submitting their resume and cover letter via the job listing available at hendrix.edu/jobs.

Hendrix College strives to maintain an environment free from discrimination and harassment, where employees treat each other with respect, dignity and courtesy. The College adheres to the principle of equal educational and employment opportunity without regard to age, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, or national origin.

OMP completes 29th summer of service

Ozark Mission Project (OMP), a United Methodist-related ministry that began with a single camp in the summer of 1986, has completed its 29th season with a dozen mission-focused camps at locations across Arkansas.

More than 1,000 youth and adults fanned out across 24 counties to participate in 512 service projects—the largest number yet in a single OMP summer. The work included building wheelchair ramps, painting houses, doing yard clean-up and other tasks for neighbors who need assistance in maintaining their homes, whether for physical or financial reasons.

Campers form “family groups” that stay together over the course of each week-long camp, serving several neighbors during that time. Each family group seeks to build relationship with the neighbors they serve, inviting them to share in lunch and a brief devotional time. The physical labor combined with experiencing the spiritual side of Christian service helps form stronger disciples of Jesus Christ.

“Every summer we have volunteers and youth and tell us they want to devote themselves to

ministry after spending one week at OMP,” says Bailey Faulkner, OMP’s executive director. “We are a ministry that’s developing future leaders of our church and state.”

This summer’s work was aided by the largest grant in OMP’s history. The Home Depot Foundation provided \$26,000 that covered the costs of expanding OMP’s stock of tools and replacing broken ones, as well as paint and other supplies. In addition, the grant will help OMP continue to expand its year-round service opportunities. OMP already joins with campus ministries to provide mission opportunities for college students who want to spend part of their winter or spring break serving others.

“Being the hands and feet of Christ to people in our own backyard fills your soul like nothing I’ve ever experienced before,” Faulkner said.

RIGHT: Campers at Wayland Spring OMP Camp celebrate their work on the frame of a wheelchair ramp before putting it in place for a neighbor.



ABOVE: A wheelchair ramp nears completion.

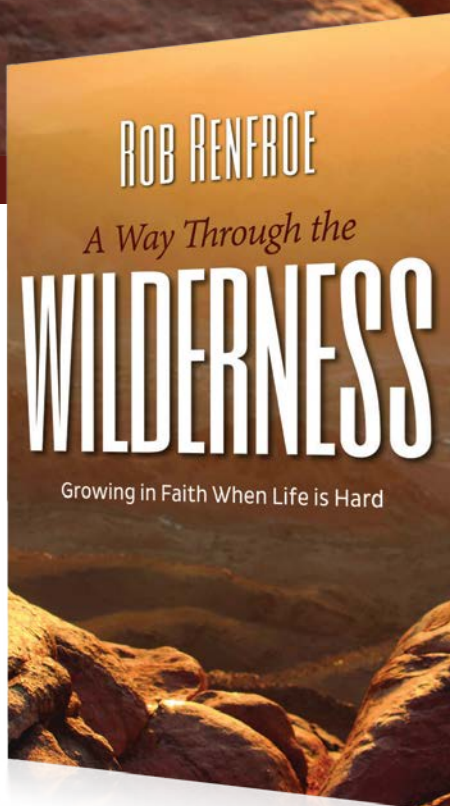
COURTESY PHOTOS



Discover how the wilderness can be a training ground to deepen our trust in God

In the Scriptures we see that often God’s people went through a wilderness experience, and these experiences changed them in profound ways. In our own lives a wilderness experience could be the loss of a loved one, a financial or health crisis, divorce, or some other painful experience, we see no end in sight and wonder how we can make it through another day.

With sensitivity and warmth, Rob Renfroe explores the wilderness experience—what it is, how we get there, why God allows it, and how we can get through it God’s way so that we learn the lessons he has for us, lessons that can be learned only in the desolate seasons of life when we are totally dependent on God.



The book can also be used as part of a six session study with a DVD featuring Rob Renfroe and comprehensive Leader Guide sold separately.

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Preparing for revival:

Preview events coming in October



Mark your calendar now to attend one of five special events that will provide a preview of resources and materials your local church can use to prepare to experience spiritual revival, the first step of the Bishop’s Mission Plan.

These preview events will guide attendees through options for worship, study, disciple formation and more. All Arkansas UMCs are encouraged to participate in this intentional season of preparation for spiritual revival beginning in January 2016, and the preview events will provide ways to help congregations get started.

One event will be held in each district. The experience, though, is not specific to your district, so if you cannot make the date of the preview nearest you, feel free to attend one of the others. All preview events are on Sunday afternoons with the exception of the Little Rock gathering, which is a Saturday morning.

- Oct. 4: First UMC Arkadelphia, 3 p.m.
- Oct. 11: Goddard UMC Fort Smith, 3:30 p.m.
- Oct. 17: Little Rock area (location being finalized), 10:30 a.m.
- Oct. 18: First UMC Jonesboro, 3:30 p.m.
- Oct. 25: First UMC Stuttgart, 4 p.m.

For details, visit <http://spiritualrevival.arumc.org>.

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 **GLOBAL MINISTRIES**
The United Methodist Church

Serve neighbors near and far through Ingathering 2015

The Saturday before Thanksgiving has long been known as a day of service for United Methodists of Arkansas. On Nov. 21, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., persons from across the Conference will come together at the Arkansas Rice Depot for the 38th annual Ingathering.

Why Ingathering matters:

Ingathering benefits United Methodist relief ministries that show Christ's love in Arkansas and worldwide. In addition, this year it will benefit the 200,000 Reasons Initiative to combat childhood hunger right here in our state.

Activities include receiving and sorting relief supply kits for transport to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Sager-Brown Depot in Baldwin, La. From there, the kits are distributed worldwide, wherever and whenever a need arises because of a flood, earthquake or other disaster.

New this year is a partnership with The Pack Shack (www.thepackshack.org), a Northwest Arkansas-based nonprofit dedicated to supplying provisions and opportunities for neighbors in need. See below for additional information.

Before you arrive:

You will need to download, print, complete and return volunteer release forms to the Arkansas Rice Depot. **Every person in your group must have his or her own form.**

Please note the Rice Depot's volunteer requirements:

- **Children under age 10 are not allowed** to volunteer; and
- To provide adequate supervision, **groups must bring at least one adult for every five persons under age 18.**

Schedule for the day:

9 a.m. – Registration and Check-in

9:30 a.m. – Worship with devotional by Bishop Gary Mueller

10 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Serve:

- Unload relief supplies from arriving vehicles and sort them for transport to Louisiana
- Box up sweet potatoes for distribution to area food pantries
- Help provide 20,000 meals through The Pack Shack meal packaging event—and, if your church has a food pantry, take some meals home with you to stock those shelves! Jobs for all ages, including tasks for those who cannot stand or move for long periods of time, will be available through this option. *(Note: To ensure equitable distribution, churches must pre-register a team with at least three adults, and indicate on the form that they wish to take packaged meals home to their food pantries.)*



ingathering



200,000 REASONS
to fight childhood hunger



Special notes for this year:

- **Please do not bring Tornado Tubs this year.** They are only distributed within Arkansas, and the Conference Disaster Response Team currently has a stock of hundreds.
- **Pre-registration includes a free t-shirt**, which can be picked up at the check-in table the morning of Ingathering.

- **Pre-registration also includes the option to take home Pack Shack meals** to stock your church's own food pantry. Advance notice through pre-registration is required.
- For pre-registration, Ingathering Remittance Forms, a soon-to-come list of early drop-off locations and dates, volunteer release forms and instructions for assembling disaster response kits, visit www.arumc.org/ingathering2015.



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INAUGURAL WEEKEND EVENTS

AUGUST 27-30, 2015

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27

Campus Cookout and Celebration
Inaugural Community Symposium
African-American Art Exhibit

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

A Day of Student Engagement
President's Inaugural Scholarship Gala

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29

President's Inauguration/Investiture
President's Inaugural Reception

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30

Ecumenical Interfaith Prayer Service

COMING UP

Vilonia United Methodist 'Bargains Galore on Hwy 64' Aug. 13-15

Join Vilonia UMC and others for the annual Bargains Galore on Highway 64, Aug. 13-15, part of Arkansas' 160 miles of crafts, yard sales and flea markets. Cities from Fort Smith to Beebe participate. Vilonia UMC is renting booths inside with air conditioning and outside in its parking lot. Vilonia United Methodist Women will serve breakfast and lunch during the event. Pastor Nathan Kilbourne is providing smoked pork for lunch.

Event hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Aug. 13-14; and 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 15. For booth rental information, contact mfreeman@tcwork.net or 501-499-2438. All proceeds from Vilonia UMC's part in the event will support United Methodist Women Missions.

EQUIP training event for youth workers at St. James UMC Little Rock Aug. 29

When goals for youth ministry can feel like moving targets and budgets are tight, how you as a leader define and measure success in ministry is an absolute necessity. EQUIP's keynote speaker, Chris Wilterdink, director of program development for Young People's Ministries at the UMC Discipleship Ministries (formerly GBOD), will address setting goals and measuring success in ministry at this day-long event for United Methodist youth workers of all kinds.

Afternoon sessions include a Volunteer Track for mentors, small group leaders, chaperons and any other person who provides support for a youth minister. The Discernment Track is geared toward youth workers who have a bit more experience in youth ministry but would still like help learning how to develop curriculum in a larger scope and sequence format. The Essentials Track is for those who are new to youth ministry or are trying to get a grasp on the basics of youth ministry. The Transitions Track addresses the specific areas of ministry that surround peak transition times for youth; from children's area to confirmation, confirmation to the youth area, youth area to beyond high school. For more information or to register, visit <http://www.arumcywn.org/equip>.

Arkansas United Methodist Men invited to annual meeting at First UMC Hot Springs Aug. 29

Gil Hanke, general secretary of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, and Mark Hicks, president of Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries National, Inc., will speak at this year's meeting of the Arkansas United Methodist Men, set for Saturday, Aug. 29, 2015, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at First United Methodist Church Hot Springs.

The meeting is open to all men who are United Methodist in the state of Arkansas. There is no cost to attend, but a reservation is strongly encouraged to ensure that lunch is available for all. To RSVP, call Che Dolan at 501-324-8000.

Heritage UMC Van Buren celebrates two anniversaries Aug. 30

In conjunction with its 30th anniversary celebration, Heritage United Methodist Church Van Buren will also go back to its roots and celebrate 175 years of Methodist witness in the Van Buren area. In 1840, the Methodist Episcopal Church of Van Buren was established, followed by St. John's Church in 1893. These two churches operated independently until 1985, when they merged to form Heritage.

The celebration will take place Sunday, Aug. 30, beginning with the 8:05 Awakening Service. Special guest the Rev. David Scroggin will bring the message at all three worship services. Scroggin is a former pastor of St. John's UMC and is currently the pastor of inviting and involving ministry at First UMC Richardson, Texas.

Evening festivities will begin at 5 p.m. with a mini gospel concert by Heritage's own Coon Supper Boys and then will proceed with fun and entertainment for all ages. There will be old-fashioned outdoor games for children, youth and adults. Indoor activities will include a pie eating contest and square dancing. Hay wagons will transport attendees to and from activities, and there will be plenty of food, fun and fellowship for everyone. Heritage UMC extends an invitation to all who would like to attend, especially former pastors, members and their families.

'Re-Firement' retreat at Mount Eagle for senior adults, Sept. 15-17

Looking for a great opportunity for worshipping God, enjoying food and fellowship and experiencing God's creation at a stunning location? Mount Eagle Retreat Center's Re-Firement event

for senior adults promises great programming, small group Bible studies, passionate worship, games, great food, relaxation, guided walking or motorized tours, and opportunities just to spend time alone listening for God. The Rev. Dan Brand will serve as retreat leader.

The two-night stay includes six meals, and double or triple occupancy rooms with linens provided. ADA accessible rooms are available. For details or to register, contact Wanda Locke, 501-723-4580 or info@mounteagle.org; or Sarge Leonard, 501-757-1875 or director@mounteagle.org.

Mount Eagle, a ministry of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church, is located at 935 Beal Road in Clinton.

UM Lawyer Conference at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock Sept. 17

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA) will hold its annual United Methodist Lawyer Conference Thursday, Sept. 17 at Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church, 4823 Woodlawn Drive in Little Rock. Registration opens at 7:45 a.m.; programming runs from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Topics on the agenda include:

- Copyright Compliance Matters
- Maintaining Tax Exempt Status
- Sensitivity to Potential Sexual Harassment
- Avoiding Ascending Liability
- Ethics: Access to Justice and the United Methodist Lawyer

CLE credit is available. Contact Janet Marshall, 501-664-8632 or jmarshall@umfa.org, to ask questions or to register.

Calling all church secretaries and administrative assistants: PAUMCS training in Little Rock Sept. 24

The Arkansas Chapter of the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) will hold a day-long training event Sept. 24 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Kendall Building at Philander Smith College in Little Rock.

Topics addressed will include social media and the church, statistical reporting, a review of changes to administrative functions that connect the local church and the Annual Conference, ideas for improving day-to-day operations in the church office and more. The day will end with a celebration of Holy Communion.

The mission of PAUMCS is to provide a supportive base for the unity and fellowship of members in order to provide individual growth, professional development, continuing education and spiritual enrichment. To learn more about the training session, contact LaDonna Busby, lbubby@arumc.org or 870-793-5247. Visit goo.gl/wFEXwu to download a registration form.

First UMC Conway celebrates sanctuary building centennial, now through November

In November, First United Methodist Church Conway will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the opening of its current sanctuary, the red-domed building at the corner of Prince and Clifton streets. Throughout the remainder of 2015, the congregation and community will get a glimpse of this building and the ways it has helped to shape generations of people in becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. All events are free and open to the public.

Celebrations began Aug. 2 to kick off "100 Days to Celebrate 100 Years." Activities include architecture tours of the sanctuary at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 3, in conjunction with Conway ArtsFest, and additional tours on Oct. 11, 18, 25, and Nov. 1 at 10 a.m. (during the Sunday school hour).

On Sept. 13, former senior pastor the Rev. Phil Hathcock will be the guest preacher at the 8:45 and 11 a.m. worship services, as the congregation honors and remembers the church's former pastors and their spouses.

A Nov. 8 celebration will mark the 100th anniversary of the completion of the sanctuary. Senior pastor the Rev. Dr. Michael Roberts will share how the congregation's history has shaped its present and its future. A brunch with birthday cake will be held at 10 a.m.

The new sanctuary was first occupied on Aug. 15, 1915. The entire building opened Sunday, Nov. 14, 1915, just 10 days before the North Arkansas Annual Conference convened there.

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Wounded Warriors land at Lobo

United Methodist Men among those helping with disabled veterans' fishing trip for third year running

BY WILL GILBERT
The Sun-Times

HEBER SPRINGS—Less than 30 seconds after the anchors plunged to the bottom of the Little Red River, Arkansas Freedom Fund member and U.S. Army veteran Pam Griffin shouted 'Got one' with a huge smile.

That catch served as a prelude to a day filled with joy for the 67 veterans gathered at Lobo Landing outside Heber Springs for the 3rd Annual Wounded Warriors fishing program, which was made possible by a joint effort by the United Methodist Men, the Arkansas Freedom Fund, Arkansas Game and

the boat, veteran Linda Jones of Little Rock was eager to net her first fish in her lifetime. A little quick with the trigger, she missed a couple before landing her first fish with a smile that would light up a room.

Over the next hour, Jones caught two more, kissed one and continued smiling throughout her hour and a half on Poplin's boat. "I think it was a lot of fun," said Linda. "I enjoyed catching the fish and giving them back was the main part. Throwing them back ... I don't want to kill nothin' and eat it. They had that nice pink color."

At 9:30 a.m. it was time to head back to the dock and pick up another

group of veterans, who had already hooked a few trout from the Lobo dock. Over the next hour and a half, Vietnam veteran Robert Bryant, originally from Tulsa, said, "I fish all the time, catfish, bass all that but I've never been on a boat." Bryant landed five trout over the next hour and a half.

In the back of Poplin's pontoon a competition broke out between veteran Tony Ray, who was stationed in Okinawa, Japan, Persian Gulf veteran Lennel Woods and North Little Rock Fort Roots VA worker Jeff Chatman. Ray and Chatman each caught five trout.

"This gives me a chance to relax my mind," said Ray. "Takes my mind off my troubles. I want to thank everyone for giving us a chance to get away."

After landing nearly 30 trout in three hours, Poplin revved up the motor to head back to the dock beaming from ear to ear. "It's a blessing to watch them relax for a

little bit and get away from where they are at. To get away from their problems is a blessing."

Poplin's crew caught nearly twice the amount of fish as last year, but he said the outing is about much more than total fish landed. "When these guys are having this much fun I don't go by how many fish they catch. I go by how they feel and how they act. Catching fish is the second most important thing. To see them relax and enjoy themselves... That is what you are really after."

Bobby Woodall, pastor at Wilburn Community Church, helped Poplin keep the hooks baited throughout the morning. "It was my first time out with the Wounded Warriors and it was truly a blessing to be a small part of what they have done and giving back to them is just an awesome experience. I enjoyed it.

"Just to see the smiles on their face and the joy when they are out there catching the fish. I just enjoyed seeing them laughing and having a good time. I appreciate what they've done for our country and to give a little back... this is special," stressed Woodall.

Upon arrival back at the dock, the guides convened to tell their stories of a successful outing. Larry Case, who lives in Hernando, Mississippi and calls Heber Springs his second home, made the 152-mile trek to lend a hand.

"We didn't see as many physically disabled as we did last year but they don't get out much and many have never trout fished," said Case. "It was a pleasure to get them going, see them catch a few fish, enjoy themselves and get out of the hospital room for a while."

Guide Doug Pearce of Pangburn echoed Case's sentiment. "It's absolutely the greatest thing that has ever happened. For what these guys have given to us it's the least we can do to give back to them. To watch some of these guys who aren't able to get out, let alone go fishing, to watch them catch fish is nothing but smiles and you know you are doing a good thing when you see that. I watched 30-40 fish get caught."

New Lobo Landing Owner Alicia Abrahamson said it was an incredible way to officially re-open the resort. "I think this program is amazing and we need continue to do it every year. I've seen a lot of excited faces today pulling those fish in. And to me that is just a drop in the bucket to help them out."



U.S. Army veteran Randy Hays caught three trout, including this rainbow on the morning of Thursday, July 9, during the Wounded Warriors guided fishing trip on the Little Red River.

Although the majority of the veterans who came this year were not physically disabled, Mark Douglas of the Fort Roots VA Hospital in North Little Rock said the 35 former soldiers he brought all have mental health issues.

"As recreational therapists it's good to get out in the community. These guys have PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). This is a wonderful opportunity to get them out with other veterans. I work with them on their addictions and depression. Some of them have never been fishing or even been in a boat," added Douglas as he munched on a breakfast prepared by the United Methodist Men.

Mark Leonard, Director of the Arkansas Freedom Fund, said this is one of the many activities offered throughout the year. "This is just an awesome experience. This is the third year the Methodist Men have come out here and we've expanded from bringing the Arkansas Freedom fund, plus patients at the VA to give veterans of Arkansas a chance to get outdoors. This is one of the premier ones that we do.

"We also offer cycling, hunting, martial arts, hiking, golf programs and then the one here as you can tell

by the numbers is just great. The guys love getting out of the hospital for a day," added Leonard.

John Pickell, President of the United Methodist Men, heads up the program by raising funds from various businesses in Heber Springs. "We want to do something kinda different. Some of these folks have been in the VA hospital for a long time. The first year we did this we had a guy here who said he hadn't been outside in two years. It means a lot, especially to the ones who have been cooped up or they are recuperating. We wanted a different way to say thank you to them," Pickell concluded.

While eating a hamburger prepared by the local Pack 200 Cub scout troop, Poplin, a Blytheville native who has made a living as a guide on the Little Red for the past 22 years, said next year they are hoping to host two fishing trips for the veterans at Lobo Landing. One will be for mental health patients and another for those confined to a wheelchair.

Reprinted with permission of the Sun-Times of Heber Springs, where this story first appeared (www.thesuntimes.com).



Lloyd Langston of the United Methodist Men of First UMC Heber Springs cooks breakfast the morning of the Wounded Warriors guided fishing trip, the third annual of these events that the group has supported.

PHOTOS BY WILL GILBERT/THE SUN-TIMES

Fish, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 15 local businesses and 15 area guides.

Not long after Griffin's catch veteran Randy Hays, confined to a wheelchair in the back of guide Jerry Poplin's pontoon boat, began wearing them out, catching two rainbow trout and one 'cutbow' in a span of 25 minutes.

Meanwhile back in the front of

The secret to faith after high school? Parents!

BY JOE IOVINO
United Methodist News Service

Many youth in the U.S. who regularly attend worship, go on summer mission trips, sing in the youth choir and actively participate in the youth ministry of their United Methodist congregations drop out of church after high school graduation. In 2006, the Barna group reported that only one-in-five maintains a similar level of church participation in their 20s.

The Rev. Daniel Dennison, Wesley campus minister at the University of Oklahoma, has noticed the difference a maturing faith makes in the lives of high school graduates.

"The students who come to us that have been discipled and taught how to have a growing relationship with Christ while on their own, generally thrive in college," he said. "They [appear to] do better in school; they are more well-adjusted and become stronger leaders in our ministry."

Many others "fall away from the church altogether," he added. "Some continue to stay involved, but it's nominally and surface level."

This is distressing news to pastors, youth leaders and parents who long to keep young people engaged in their faith.

Parents' faith is key

The National Study on Youth and Religion recently found a factor that is "nearly deterministic" in turning this around. Eight out of ten (82 percent) young adults ages 24-29 who were still participating in their faith after being active in high school had one thing in common.

The secret? Their parents.

Youth leaders agree. "Parents are the critical discipler, period," said Seth Martin, lead student Pastor at Faithbridge United Methodist

Church in Spring, Texas. "Student ministries aren't (or shouldn't be, rather) the primary spiritual mentors of students, but should instead subsidize the discipleship already taking place in the home."

Many youth ministers are encouraging parents in their critical role in the spiritual development of their teenage children.

"Every chance I get to talk to parents," said Stephen Ingram, director of student ministries at Canterbury United Methodist Church in Birmingham, Ala., "I remind them of the stats."

But not all parents feel prepared to spiritually mentor their kids. That's why, Ingram said, "the best youth ministries work in partnership with parents."

United Methodist Communications spoke with several youth ministry leaders about what they are sharing with parents.

Deeper parent-youth communication

The study found that youth who remained active regularly had faith conversations with their parents.

Often the extent of parent-youth spiritual discussions happen on the ride home from church. "How was church (or youth group, Sunday school, small group, etc.)?" the parent asks. "Good," is the monosyllabic response.

Casey Walker, minister to youth and their families at Searcy (Arkansas) First United Methodist Church, saw something similar following a youth trip. "I noticed not a lot of conversations were happening at home," she said. "The youth didn't know how to put words together to express what they had experienced, and parents were not sure how to ask good questions."

Walker invited parents to a gathering where she shared some tips for starting spiritual



Casey Walker (right) of First UMC Searcy began helping parents and youth have deeper conversations following an impactful student ministry trip. PHOTO COURTESY OF CASEY WALKER

conversations with their youth.

Ingram encourages parents to avoid questions that can be answered with one word. He teaches parents to facilitate discussions. Parents don't need to be experts with all the answers. They just need to be willing to journey and question along with their children.

Some great places to start are talking about Sunday's sermon; including faith when discussing something in the news; or asking about the youth group lesson.

Martin emails parents in his youth ministry "Followups," which are overviews of the youth lesson that contain "Scripture and a few basic questions to enable parents' conversations with their students to be a bit more targeted."

Without a tool like "Followups," parents can ask their children what they liked best about the lesson, or what challenged them.

Parental support

In addition to education opportunities, Walker's youth ministry has formed several discipleship groups for parents of youth. They "intentionally put

parents of 6th graders in groups with parents of seniors to encourage one another."

Faithbridge also holds educational workshops that "pull parents together... and connect them with sharp people who can inspire, equip and challenge parents to engage on a given topic," Martin said. These two-hour dinner gatherings also connect parents who might not otherwise meet.

Parents are strengthened by the support of others who have teenage children.

Walker wants parents to know, "You're not alone. Parenting is tough and there are others to journey with you."

A spiritual journey for the family

Parents sharing the importance of their faith with their teenage children was named by the study as an important factor.

Ingram, who is also the director of whole family spirituality at Canterbury United Methodist Church, helps parents by holding an annual Whole Family Spirituality Retreat. The retreat seeks to "help

families think about and practice being an intentionally spiritual unit," Ingram said.

He encourages families to think theologically together. Some might discuss a devotion over dinner while others might talk through the highs and lows of their day.

The goal of this time together, Ingram says, "is not so much how to deal with X, but what you think about X, and what our faith teaches us about it."

Start small

Ingram said it is wise for parents to begin by taking "baby steps." Walker agrees and encourages parents to persevere.

When she first wanted to start praying a blessing over her daughter every night, Walker was hesitant. "She's going to think I'm crazy," she thought.

After a few nights of discomfort, things changed. Her daughter wanted to know more about the blessing. "Show me where [in the Bible] it came from," she asked.

"Now, when I'm out of town," Walker said, "she will call and ask me to give her the blessing over the phone before she goes to bed."

A matter of influence

While involvement in youth ministry is a valuable experience, "Nobody has the influence, exposure time, authority (or even biblical command/expectation) to raise up students like the parent does," said Martin.

"After youth group," Walker said, "parents are still there, for the rest of their lives."

Iovino works for UMC.org at United Methodist Communications. Contact him at jiovino@umcom.org or 615-312-3733.

Does your church want an app? New opportunity available

The Arkansas Conference Center for Technology is piloting a program to make low-cost mobile apps available to every church. Your church can have its own mobile app within the Arkansas UMC mobile app. Easy to set up and easy to use, your app will help members connect to your church ministry and activities, and is an easy avenue for faith sharing as well.

Visit <http://goo.gl/forms/7zBrwm1GCl> for more details, or to sign up.

Should you have further questions, please contact our vendor, Suzy Keenan, at 334-246-5334 or suzy@myocv.com. She will help you determine your app features and obtain your choice for color scheme.

If you haven't already downloaded the Arkansas Conference app, please give it a try by using your phone or tablet to scan the appropriate code pictured below.

Blessings in your ministry,
Mark Epperson, director
Center for Technology, Arkansas Conference



Scan for iPhone app



Scan for Android app



Scan for iPad app

Recent UMFA grants support preaching, feeding, camping

Eleven Arkansas college students and three leaders attended the Young Preachers Festival July 16-17 at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan., thanks to grant funding from The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas (UMFA).

The festival is designed to help young adults discern their calling and inspire them to follow it. Attendees learned from and networked with leading preachers from across the denomination.

"It set a great foundation for my future in preaching—how I want to preach, and what is important in preaching," said Emily Autry, one of the attendees and a recent high school graduate. "It was also great to get to learn from some of the best preachers of the day. They taught us what it takes to build a great congregation by what we preach."

The grant covered transportation, lodging and registration for all Arkansans who attended the festival.

"By making an investment in them today, we are creating leaders for our church tomorrow," said the Rev. Dede Roberts, director of the Arkansas Conference Center for Vitality and one of the pastors who accompanied the young adults to the event.

"This grant request fits right into our emphasis on leadership development," said Jim Argue Jr., president and CEO of UMFA. "Our Grants Committee is happy to make it possible for college students to explore their calling before they end their undergraduate education."

Preaching cohort

UMFA also is supporting a second group of pastors from Arkansas in the Preaching Excellence program, a partnership with Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology.

"UMFA's support of the Preaching Excellence program is critical and much appreciated as we

continue to support pastoral leaders who are ready to learn new skills for communicating the gospel in a rapidly changing culture," Roberts said.

One cohort of Arkansas preachers already participates in the program, with the Rev. Phil Hathcock as facilitator. The new group will be facilitated by the Rev. Beth Waldrup. The participating preachers have shown effectiveness and commitment to continuing to develop their preaching skills.

This second group includes United Methodist pastors the Revs. Candace Barron, John Embrey, Angie Gage, J.J. Galloway, Michelle Morris and Natasha Murray-Norman, as well as the Revs. Gregory C. Nettles and Alvin Smith of the AME Church.

Mobile food pantry

UMFA awarded a \$40,000 grant to fund the purchase of a vehicle for a new mobile food pantry ministry serving students at ASU Beebe, ASU

Marked Tree and ASU Newport, along with supplementing a backpack food program for elementary and middle school students in Harrisburg.

This ministry began as a conversation between the Rev. Clark Atkins of First UMC Harrisburg and the Rev. Samantha Meadors of the Arkansas State University Wesley Foundation, about the need for such outreach. Students at two-year colleges are often non-traditional in age and sometimes hold down two or three jobs while they attend school.

"Many of them are just getting by," Atkins said. "The mobile food pantry can be the initial connection with these students and help foster deeper relationships. We are grateful to UMFA for the grant that will make it possible to transport food to the campuses."

Pastors at local churches near each of the two-year colleges will be involved, and student volunteers will operate the mobile food pantry. The Northeast District is helping with costs

for the first semester of operation.

Aldersgate activities

A \$50,000 grant from UMFA is being used to help Camp Aldersgate set up a fund to maintain its soon-to-be-built activity center, where campers can play indoors during rainy or hot weather.

The activity center is being built with a \$1 million grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation. The camp is halfway toward its goal of \$250,000 for the fund to support and maintain the center. "The income from this fund will allow us to maintain the building, purchase equipment and art supplies, as well as help pay salaries for recreational staff," said CEO Sarah Wacaster.

As one of the largest United Methodist foundations in the country, UMFA manages \$135 million in endowment funds and other charitable assets that benefit local churches and other United Methodist ministries.

Disciple Fast Track seeks test churches for 24-week format

Since 1987, Disciple Bible Study has reached nearly three million people worldwide, introducing the grand sweep of Scripture in a 34-week format. The new Disciple Fast Track maintains the integrity and principles of the original study, but its 24-week format can better meet the needs of a hectic world. Participants still receive a thorough introduction to the Bible in almost a third less time. Fast Track is not a replacement for the original; it is simply a practical option.

Disciple Fast Track is being developed by Bishop Richard Wilke (former bishop of the Arkansas Area and author of the Disciple Bible Study Manuals) and Christian educator Susan Fuquay, with the permission and endorsement of the United Methodist Publishing House, the publisher of Disciple Bible Study. It uses the same study manual, but with class time and course length adjusted for busy lifestyles. New print and video materials give participants the tools to absorb and retain what they learn.

Main features of Disciple Fast Track:

- Classes meet for a total of 24 weeks

DISCIPLE
FAST TRACK
BIBLE STUDY FOR BUSY LIVES

- Each group session lasts 75 minutes
- Designed for Small Groups and Large Groups
- A new, user-friendly Leader Guide
- 24 new weekly Illustrated Review Videos
- 24 new Introductory Videos
- Illustrated Review Flash Cards
- Leader Online Training and Online Community

In this final year of development, Disciple Fast Track is seeking 10 churches from each annual conference to join in beta 2 testing to make sure the new Fast Track study is of the highest quality. More than 5,000 students in 350 churches participated in beta testing last year. These churches reported participants experiencing spiritual growth and spiritual renewal.

Churches that participate in this beta 2 testing phase will receive the final, official-release materials at no cost. To explore the materials or sign up as a test church, visit www.disciplefasttrack.com.

YOUTH 2015

(continued from page 1)

She protested when the idea came up in a design team meeting. But she also knew the experience of helping to plan YOUTH 2015 had increased her confidence in her own leadership skills, so she agreed to give it a try.

"I never thought I could do that, but I did," she said. "It ended up being great."

"It was interesting to see, with Claire's involvement and Brennen's involvement, how excited our Arkansas people were," said Michelle Moore, youth and young adult ministries coordinator for the Arkansas Conference. "They embraced it. Most of our kids, the 200 kids who were there, had never met Claire or Brennen.... [but] by the end, they had claimed them as their own: 'These are our Arkansas people.' It was really cool that they got the connection piece of it."

"I'm really happy with how many kids we had from Arkansas that came," Thompson said. "We were kind of joking about how Arkansas was taking over" because not only did she and Boose emcee, Bishop Gary Mueller was involved in leadership as well. And the Rev. Jay Clark, associate pastor of Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock, would go onstage a few minutes before each evening's worship to lead "Funnzies"—silly songs and games—just like he does at Arkansas Conference youth events.

Thompson said it was common for people to stop design team members in the hallways to express appreciation for their work.

"I had a lot of kids just stop me and talk to me, and adults, too, that were just really impressed and moved by it all," she said.



Bishop Gary Mueller (front row, left) with just a few of the Arkansas young people and youth leaders who attended YOUTH 2015 in Orlando.

COURTESY PHOTO

Besides worship, workshops and service projects, attendees elected youth and youth-leader observers to attend next summer's Jurisdictional Conferences. Thompson and Clark were elected to observe the South Central Jurisdictional Conference.

YOUTH 2015 also included the baptism of one young person. Thompson said there was discussion months ago about whether to intentionally include a baptism in one of the worship services, but they decided against trying to orchestrate that step in someone's faith journey. But the Holy Spirit can have that kind of impact at YOUTH 2015. Mid-week, a young woman approached the team about being baptized. After having a conversation with her and making sure it was OK with her family back home, Bishop Mueller carried out the sacrament during worship, as the young woman's youth minister and youth group surrounded her in support.

To see more from YOUTH 2015, check social media channels for the hashtag #y15umc.

United Methodists welcome health care ruling

BY HEATHER HAHN
United Methodist News Service

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision to uphold subsidies for health insurance bought on the federal exchange comes as a relief to many United Methodist clergy and lay church employees. The ruling also affects millions of other Americans.

Four United Methodist conferences currently send all or some of their local church employees to buy insurance on the exchanges.

The 6-3 ruling in *King v. Burwell* also affects the United Methodist Church's longtime social emphasis on increasing people's access to health care.

The Rev. Shelly Forrest, pastor of El Paso United Methodist Church in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference, is among those grateful subsidies will continue. She receives a subsidy of \$80 a month to help buy insurance since her conference canceled its group insurance plan.

"Wow! Great! That IS good news. That's nearly \$1,000 per year that we can use for our family's needs and/or being generous in other ways," Forrest said.

She also noted others would endure even more financial hardship if the decision had gone the other way.

The case did not involve a constitutional question. At issue was a dispute over statutory interpretation: Does the Affordable Care Act authorize the Internal Revenue Service to provide tax subsidies for people in the 34 states that rely on the federal health insurance marketplace?

The individuals who brought the lawsuit contended it only allowed subsidies on state-established exchanges.

The majority opinion, written by Chief Justice John Roberts, acknowledges that the challengers' "arguments about the plain meaning... are strong."

But the ruling goes on to say: "In this instance, the context and structure of the Act compel us to depart from what would otherwise be the most natural reading of the pertinent statutory phrase."

In summary, the decision says the plain reading of the contested section would leave the health care law basically intact but functioning poorly and not as intended. The law, also known as Obamacare, provides the subsidies to help people afford

the health insurance everyone is now required to buy.

At present, about 6.4 million Americans receive subsidies to help pay for private insurance on the federal marketplace, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. To put that in perspective, that number is close to the entire population of Tennessee.

Subsidies are tied to household income. Nationally, the average subsidy is \$272 per month. The opinion noted that 87 percent of the individuals who bought insurance on a federal exchange did so with the tax credits.

Patricia L. Miller, a United Methodist and Republican state senator in Indiana, said she personally is opposed to the Affordable Care Act but thinks the Supreme Court made the right call in this case.

"To penalize states that have not set up their own exchanges would be a mistake," she said. Miller is also executive director of the Confessing Movement within The United Methodist Church, an unofficial evangelical advocacy group. The group has not taken a position on the law.

Andrew Q. Hendren, general counsel for the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits, said the Supreme Court ruling provides some certainty in the U.S. health market.

"This will allow the employer coverage market and health care industry generally to continue to adjust strategies and business practices to the Affordable Care Act without major reversals or shifts," he said.

This marks the second time the Supreme Court upheld a key part of the law. In 2012, the court rejected a challenge to the constitutionality of the insurance mandate.

"We should start calling this law SCOTUScare," wrote Justice Antonin Scalia in the current case's dissent.

Big impact for UMs

Conferences have seen the new health care law as a game changer that relieves them and local churches of one of their greatest financial burdens.

The conferences currently utilizing the new insurance marketplaces are Illinois Great Rivers, Northern Illinois, Florida and the Great Plains, which encompasses United Methodists in Kansas and Nebraska. The Arkansas

Conference is scheduled to end its group plan in December and send employees to the insurance marketplace starting in 2016.

All of these conferences are in states that rely on either a federal exchange or a "partnership exchange" that uses the HealthCare.gov portal. All stood to be affected by the high court's ruling.

The problem many conferences face, say benefits officers, is providing health care to an aging and often ailing risk pool.

As of 2014, the United Methodist-related Lewis Center for Church Leadership reported that the median age of elders is 56, that of deacons is 55 and that of local pastors is 57. Surveys also repeatedly have found United Methodist pastors in the United States have a higher incidence of health problems than their peers, mostly due to stress.

In the United Methodist Church, conferences historically have taken on the primary responsibility for sponsoring or participating in a group health plan that covers full-time clergy and lay employees in the United States.

Local churches generally contribute to the health benefits of their pastor and other workers through apportionment payments, direct bills or a combination of the two. The *Book of Discipline*, the denomination's law book, does not require conferences to cover lay employees at local churches and other extension ministries.

Benefit officers say using the insurance marketplaces saves money that local churches can spend on other ministries. Conferences may also be able to appoint more clergy.

Mona Williams, Arkansas Conference benefits officer, said many Arkansas churches were contributing up to \$20,882 toward a clergy family's health insurance.

Because the Conference's current group plan is self-funded, the Conference ultimately is responsible for paying medical claims. The past three years, those claims topped \$5 million.

Arkansas Conference members voted 639 to 61 to discontinue the conference's group plan in December. Under the new plan, churches are asked to give their employees at least a \$12,000 raise to help pay for insurance. But Williams is confident many also will qualify for subsidies as well.

To qualify for subsidies, people generally must have a household

income between 100 percent and 400 percent of the federal poverty level and not have access to another source of affordable health insurance coverage. That's around \$46,000 for a single person and \$90,000 for a family of four.

"I think when people see that... they are going to be pleasantly surprised," Williams said. As a Conference employee, she also will be among those shopping on the exchange.

Forrest, the Illinois pastor, said she is thankful for the relief going on the exchanges provides for her local church.

"My current church was able to afford our group policy, but one of my previous churches (a much smaller church) was struggling financially," she said. "I think that is true of many of our smaller congregations. I am thankful for the amount of money that this frees up so that the church can be more about ministry than about providing me with health care. It also takes the pressure off the annual conference for being the 'bad guys' who insist on placing this heavy burden on the congregations."

In 2012, General Conference amended the *Book of Discipline* to allow conferences to end their group health plans if, regardless of their health status, employees can find affordable coverage through health insurance exchanges or another mechanism.

Historical commitment to health care

The United Methodist Board of Church and Society, the agency charged with advocating for the denomination's social teachings, was among religious groups that advocated for the law's passage in 2010.

The Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, the agency's top executive, was one of six faith leaders who spoke at a rally outside the court during *King v. Burwell's* oral arguments.

She and other members of the Washington Interreligious Staff Council

Health Care Working Group released a statement June 25 applauding the ruling.

"The United Methodist Church says 'health care is a basic human right,'" she said. "We are relieved that that the Supreme Court upheld the intention of Congress to ensure that people will continue to receive health care subsidies. We believe this decision upholds the common good for all."

Going back to its founder John Wesley, the Methodist movement historically has made health care a primary focus of ministry.

Wesley preached on the biblical mandate to care for the sick, and he set up the first free public clinic in London, which he ran until it became too expensive for his limited resources.

United Methodists have continued Wesley's commitment to ministry with the sick with church-supported health clinics, hospitals and nursing homes. The United Methodist Association today represents more than 380 United Methodist-affiliated health and welfare ministries in the U.S., including hospitals and retirement communities.

United Methodists also have a denomination-wide commitment to global health, leading efforts to fight HIV/AIDS and eliminate preventable deaths from malaria in Africa.

But the denomination's official position is that the church and its members cannot provide comprehensive health care alone. The *Book of Discipline*, the denomination's book of law and teachings, says "it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care."

Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service, and a former editor of the Arkansas United Methodist.

What the church teaches

In the *Book of Discipline*, which outlines church law, teachings and organization, see the Social Principle on the "Right to Health Care," which states "health care is a basic human right." In the *Book of Resolutions*, the denomination's statements on social issues, see:

- "Health and Wholeness," first adopted by the 1984 General Conference
- "Health Care for All in the United States," approved by the 2008 General Conference, which charges the United Methodist Board of Church and Society with "primary responsibility for advocating health care for all" in the U.S. Congress
- "Maternal Health: The Church's Role" approved at the 2012 General Conference

OBITUARIES

CLINTON

John Sandine

The Rev. John C. Sandine, 64, of Clinton, passed away June 23, 2015, in Russellville. He was born Nov. 20, 1950 in Stuttgart, to the late Frank A. and Clara VanHoutin Sandine.



John Sandine

He served for 14 years as a local pastor in the Little Rock and Arkansas Conferences of the United Methodist Church, including at Altheimer, Marianna, Bear Creek Camp, Piggott, Bright's Chapel, Portland, Dermott and Wilmot. He was a treasured minister and friend to all who knew him. He was also a veteran of the United States Air Force and honorably served his country during the Vietnam era.

Left to cherish his memory is his wife, Brenda Russell Sandine.

A memorial service was held Friday evening, June 26, 2015, at First United Methodist Church Clinton, with the Rev. George Odell officiating.

CONWAY

James A. Barton Sr.

The Rev. James Allen Barton Sr., 77, of Conway, formerly of Flippin, passed away July 1, 2015. He was born Nov. 20, 1937, in Thayer, Mo., the son of Marvin and Artie Allen Barton.

James married Sophia Baldwin on Easter Sunday, 1956, at Tilton United Methodist Church in Tilton, Ark. He attended seminary at Perkins School of Theology, and served in the United Methodist Church for 45 years, beginning in the North Arkansas Conference at Griffithville in 1960 and ending his service in the Little Rock Conference in England, Ark., in 1993.

James also served on the worship committee and as chair of communications for the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church. He moved from Conway from Flippin in 2011. He loved to fish and paint in oils.

James is survived by his wife, Sophia Barton of Conway; children, James (Sherry) Barton of Gentry, Aloha Danette Doss of Conway and Anthony Barton of Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.; 10 grandchildren, Brian (Amy) Barton, Tammy (Bubba) Hall, Brynn (Casey) Shelly, Brooke Barton, John Ryan (Amanda) Johnson, Kellsie Smalley, Hollis Barton, JB Smalley, Hattie Barton and Hanna Barton; and 12 great-grandchildren.



James A. Barton Sr.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his grandparents, Hayden and Nova Allen and Elmer and Mary Barton; and a great-grandson, Bailey Barton.

A funeral service was held Friday, July 3, 2015, at Bull Shoals United Methodist Church, with the Rev. Wayne Clark officiating.

Burial followed in the Kirby's Tucker Memorial Cemetery, Mountain Home, with Brian Barton, John Ryan Johnson, Casey Shelly, Bubba Hall, Levi Hall and JB Smalley as pallbearers.

Memorials may be made to the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, 5300 Evergreen Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205 or CARTI, 622 Hospital Dr., Mountain Home, AR 72653.

James M. McKay

James Magnus McKay Jr., 77, of Conway passed away Tuesday, July 7, 2015.

He was born Aug. 26, 1937, in Hot Springs to James Magnus McKay Sr. and Hazel Nunn Trainer McKay. He served

his country in the United States Army and served for many years as a minister in the North Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church.



Jim McKay

His pastoral appointments included 27 years at Salem UMC Conway and 22 years as the director of the Wesley Foundation campus ministry at the University of Central Arkansas, where he helped approximately 40 persons discern a calling to United Methodist ordained ministry, and influenced the lives of many other young people who counted him as a mentor and friend.

He is preceded in death by his parents; a sister, Jo Carolyn Cragar; and grandsons Forrest LeVan and Cameron Williams.

Survivors include his wife of 56 years, Bonnie Plumlee McKay, son James Magnus McKay III of Conway, daughters Suzanne McKay of Conway and Nancy Morris (B.J.) of Conway. Other survivors include sister Patricia Davis of Roe, Arkansas, grandchildren Caroline Rodgers (Cheney) and David Douglas along with a host of extended family and friends.

A funeral service was held Friday, July 10, 2015, at First United Methodist Church Conway, with the Rev. Michael Roberts officiating. Burial followed Shady Grove Cemetery in Clarendon, with the Rev. Daniel Kirkpatrick officiating. Pallbearers were Cheney Rodgers, B.J. Morris, David Douglas, Dee Davis, Ray Nabholz and Daniel Kirkpatrick.

Memorial donations may be made to First United Methodist Church Clarendon, 121 N. 3rd Street, Clarendon, AR 72029.

Mission

(continued from page 1)

After being founded in 2003 as Betel Mission and meeting at Central UMC Rogers, the congregation moved to Springdale when an opportunity arose to share a facility with Wesley UMC Springdale. That English-speaking congregation eventually closed, and the mission continued there, at what is now the Agape Campus of First UMC Springdale.

Over the years, though, most of the mission's congregants continued to come from the Rogers area, which is home to a greater Spanish-speaking population. Members of the mission continued to hope for a way to move their worshipping community back to the Rogers area.

"If the people are coming from up there, it makes sense for there to be a ministry up in Rogers," said the Rev. Stephen Coburn, who became involved in the process as senior pastor of First UMC Springdale, and now serves as the superintendent of the Northwest District, where all the partnering churches are located.

Then-district superintendent the Rev. Bud Reeves and Coburn met with clergy and lay leaders from

four United Methodist churches in Rogers. Those leaders began to work together with the Rev. Maxine Allen, the Arkansas Conference assistant director of mission and ministry for mission field engagement, to develop a ministry plan for the new arrangement, including SMART goals (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely). Oakley Chapel, Central and First UMCs agreed to provide funding and other support, and Grace UMC is investing by sharing its space with the mission.

An older congregation with a desire for action, Grace UMC Rogers already hosted a food pantry and had joined Oakley, First and Central UMCs in a rotation to provide on-site community meals on Sundays.

"Everything we're doing at Grace is being done with the other churches," said the Rev. Shane Pair, who serves as pastor for both Oakley Chapel and Grace. "I just think it is living out United Methodism at its best. It really is."

After the July 12 opening worship, which was conducted in English and interpreted in Spanish, worshippers moved outside for a "church fiesta" that included food, games and music to celebrate the beginning of this ministry. People

from the other partner churches joined the fiesta after attending services at their usual places of worship.

Rogers Hispanic Mission holds weekly worship 11:30 on Sundays (deliberately set at a later time to accommodate those who work late on Saturday nights), and Bible study on Tuesday nights. The people of Grace UMC Rogers worship at 9 a.m., and plans are coming together for joint worship with Rogers Hispanic Mission on fifth Sundays.

"The members are so happy that they are going to go out and evangelize because this is their area," Lizcano said. "They used to do that when we were in Springdale, but many people would say, 'Well, it's so far...'" Now those people don't have an excuse to not get involved, Lizcano says, because the mission is nearby once again. And in the first month since returning to Rogers, the congregation has gained three households.

Coburn points out that this new arrangement is an example of mission field ministry as set forth in Step 5 of the Bishop's Mission Plan, "Look Like the Neighborhood."

"I'm very appreciative of the cooperative effort of these churches," he said. "To me, as a superintendent,



The Revs. Ramiro Lizcano of Rogers Hispanic Mission, Stephen Coburn of the Northwest District office and Shane Pair of Oakley Chapel and Grace UMCs pause for a moment during the "church fiesta" that followed the mission's first worship service in Grace UMC's sanctuary.

COURTESY PHOTO

this is an example of this mission field ministry that we've been talking about—churches coming together for the sake of the mission field."

The mission field will soon benefit from a back-to-school kickoff, planned as a joint venture among the partner churches and Rogers Hispanic Mission.

"I think the best way to do ministry is to do it connectionally with other churches that have the same vision," Lizcano said.

Pair agrees.

"What [the cooperating churches] said is, 'We believe as we invite the Hispanic community and we infuse life into the Hispanic community and to Grace, we also are infusing life into all our other churches,'" he said.

"That's really what they've all said: 'We see this as a way of enhancing the ministry of all the United Methodist churches in Rogers, Arkansas.'"

41 Arkansas Students Receive Dollars for Scholars Awards

This year more students than ever before received Dollars for Scholars awards to begin or continue their education at United Methodist colleges, universities and seminaries. For each recipient, the students' local churches gave \$1,000 and the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation matched that

contribution. Then the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas gave \$1,000 and the student's selected college contributed \$1,000 for a significant \$4,000 award to each student.

The UMFA is proud to make a total of \$41,000 in scholarship contributions to these students:

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Ethny M. Ashcraft
 Arthur Bright
 Adonika S. Bullard
 Samuel M. Coker
 Kishon Delancy
 Lance A. Dunbar
 Katherine Q. Emery
 Andrew D. Fleming
 Ava Z. Graves
 Liam R. Hankins-Hull
 Caitlyn B. Hendrickson
 Emmett A. Hill
 Tierra A. Holland
 Toria A. Holland
 Trevor A. Ivy
 Julius C. Keith
 Lawrence E. Knox
 Titus N. Manning
 Madeline J. McDonald
 Malachi J. McDonald
 Michael R. McMurray
 Kaelin K. McNeal
 Candace L. Parchman
 Kingsley G. Pinder
 Steven R. Ragsdale
 Daniel K. Reece
 Michala J. Roberts
 Alexander M. Shannon
 Hannah E. Shelton
 Carvon Smith
 Jonathan T. Spradley
 Victoria L. Spradley
 Shabborn Vail
 Jordan A. Walker
 Sara I. Walker
 Chet R. Young
 Margaret A. Young

SEMINARY STUDENTS

Deena M. Hamilton
 Taylor W. Loy
 Laura J. Prange
 Ronald J. Pressgrove

HOME CHURCH

Lakeside UMC, Pine Bluff
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Conway
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 St. James UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Batesville
 Grand Avenue UMC, Hot Springs
 First UMC, Bryant
 First UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Hot Springs
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Fort Smith
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Grace UMC, Conway
 Grace UMC, Conway
 First UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 First UMC, Bryant
 First UMC, West Memphis
 First UMC, Conway
 Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock
 Asbury UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock
 Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Wesley Chapel UMC, Little Rock
 Lakeside UMC, Pine Bluff

HOME CHURCH

St. Andrew UMC, Little Rock
 Central UMC, Fayetteville
 First UMC, DeWitt
 St. Luke UMC, Little Rock

COLLEGE

Hendrix College
 Philander Smith College
 Philander Smith College
 Hendrix College
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 Hendrix College
 Hendrix College
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SEMINARY

Perkins School of Theology
 Duke University Divinity School
 Iliff School of Theology
 United Theological Seminary



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